

Old Baptist Church
DuPage County
Naperville, Illinois

H.A.B.S. Ill.136

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Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District No. Ill.1.

Historic American Buildings Survey
Earl H. Reed, District Officer
435 North Michigan Ave., Chicago

OLD BAPTIST CHURCH

Naperville, Du Page County, Illinois

Owner:

Date of Erection: 1844

Architect: Unknown.

Builder: Unknown.

Present Condition: Fair. A bay on the front was added over which was added a belfry and steeple. Moved in 1885. Interior fittings ripped out and now used as a warehouse.

Number of Stories: One.

Materials of Construction: Wood.

Other Existing Records: Photographs. Plat of church drawn by W. C. VanOsdel.

Additional Data: (See following pages).

OLD BAPTIST CHURCH
DU PAGE COUNTY
NAPERVILLE, ILLINOISDISTRICT NO. ILL.1.
NORTHERN ILLINOIS

Project No. ILL.136

EARL H. REED, JR.
DISTRICT OFFICER
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Ralph F. Gross
Juilet PeddleSOURCENaperville
Centennial
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1931, D.A.R.
Naperville

This community was founded by Capt. Joseph Naper in the winter of 1831, and the town was laid out in 1835. By 1843, through the instrumentality of the Rev. Mr. Morgan Edwards, the Baptist Church was organized with nine members. Steps were immediately taken to build a church. The building was commenced immediately, on land donated by two of the members. Some difficulty arose and one of the dissenting donors of the land blocked the construction and forbade removal of the structure. This move was circumvented by a group of prominent citizens who removed the building in the night. The building was located on Chicago Avenue, as shown on bird's eye view of the town published in 1869.

By the early part of 1844 the building was so far along that it was used by Baptist and Congregational Societies on alternate Sundays. In 1847 an addition was made which added another bay on the front, over which was added a belfry and steeple. Sometime in the 1850's the congregation split after the introduction of Spiritualism. The extent of disintegration may be indicated in the fact that not only did the church decay, but the congregation passed out of existence. Services were held at irregular intervals until 1879, when the church was finally closed.

The last trace of feeling for this building is noticed in an observation of 1883 that "The Baptist Church is rapidly passing into a heap of ruins. It is a pity to have so good a building

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wrecked. It ought to be put to some good use, be it ever so far from what it was originally intended."

In 1884 the church bell from which the inscription has been traced "Andrew Meneely, West Troy, N.Y. 1846", was placed on the Reuss Building and used there as a fire bell. The bell is now located on top of the Fire Department Building.

The building was finally moved in 1884 or 1885 to its present location. The interior fittings were ripped out and it was used as a blacksmith shop, as shown in a painting made in the 1890's and now hanging in the Seville Restaurant in Naperville. After that it was used as a Carriage Repository and is now called, or may be referred to as Goetch's Ware House, in which ~~are~~^{is} stored farm machinery ~~that is~~ for sale.

The disposition of the interior is uncertain. The location of the pews can be gathered from the traces left on the sides of the building, the profile indicates that they were slip and not box pews.

Mrs. Harriet Alsbaugh, one of the oldest residents, and a former teacher in the school which was held in the basement, has given us a plat of the church, drawn by W.C. VanOsdel, which shows the seating arrangement.

Mr. Lewis Rich states that there was a baptismal fountain in front of the pulpit which was covered. The ceiling was "ornamented and frescoed around". The entrance to the basement was probably made through a door at the back. There was a small balcony, the disposition of which is uncertain.

By Ralph J. Cross

Approved Edward J. Reed